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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/901,566	07/11/2001	Keita Ito	010698	4812
38834	7590	06/29/2004	EXAMINER	
WESTERMAN, HATTORI, DANIELS & ADRIAN, LLP 1250 CONNECTICUT AVENUE, NW SUITE 700 WASHINGTON, DC 20036				LUGO, CARLOS
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
		3676		

DATE MAILED: 06/29/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	09/901,566	ITO ET AL.
	Examiner Carlos Lugo	Art Unit 3676

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 09 April 2004.
 2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1,3 and 4 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 1,3 and 4 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on 13 November 2002 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
 6) Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

1. This Office Action is in response to applicant's amendment filed on April 9, 2004.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. **Claims 1,3 and 4 are rejected** under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over DE Pat No 3,841,203 to Obermayer et al (Obermayer) in view of US Pat No 5,263,444 to Prior et el (Prior).

Obermayer discloses a seal structure comprising a crankcase (1) having a crank chamber. The crankcase is coupled to a lower face of a cylindrical block (4). The crankcase includes first and second case halve (1' and 1'') coupled to each other in a plane perpendicular to the joint surfaces between the crankcase and the cylindrical block.

One of the case halve includes a U shaped groove (5) that extends along a peripheral edge of the chamber (Page 2 Lines 5-9, where at least one member includes the groove).

Enlarged recesses (where 12 is located) are provided only in the first and second case halves and extend laterally from opposite ends of the seal groove.

A bar shaped seal member (6) is mounted in the groove. A gasket (17) is located between the joint surfaces of the block and the crankcase that comes in close contact with the enlarged end portions of the bar seal member.

A T-shaped intersecting joint are among the cylindrical head and the first and second case halves is sealed by the seal member and the gasket

However, Obermayer fails to disclose that at the opposing ends of the bar shaped seal has an enlarged end to be entirely filled on the enlarged recess. Obermayer disclose that a seal ring (10) that is attached to the opposite ends of the bar seal member and placed on the enlarged recess (with the help of the spring member 15).

Prior teaches a seal structure (30) located on a groove (28) between crankcases members (10 and 12) comprising a bar shaped seal member (32) having enlarged opposite ends (36) that is received on enlarged recess (18). Between the enlarged end portion of the seal and the joint surfaces is placed a gasket (24).

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have a seal arrangement, as taught by Prior, into a seal structure as described by Obermayer, in order to permit accurate location of the seal member in the engine body and to provide a seal structure that will be easy to install.

As to claim 3, Obermayer discloses that the seal groove (5) and each of the enlarged recesses (where 12 is located) have substantially the same depth.

As to claim 4, Obermayer discloses that the seal member (6) comprises an intermediate bar shape portion having a circular cross section. Prior teaches that the enlarged end portion can have a square cross section.

Response to Arguments

4. Applicant's arguments filed April 9, 2004 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Regarding applicant's arguments that Obermayer fails to disclose that only one of the joint surfaces of the case halves has the seal groove (Page 4 Line 5), Obermayer clearly discloses that the groove could be only one case halve or it could be in both (see translation, Page 2 Lines 5-9 and Claim 1 Lines 5 and 6).

As to applicant's arguments that Prior fails to disclose that only one of the joint surfaces of the case halves has the seal groove (Page 5 Line 1), Prior is only used to teach that it is well known in the art to have a seal structure located on a groove between crankcase members comprising a bar shaped seal member having enlarged opposite ends that are received on an enlarged recess.

As to applicant's arguments that neither Obermayer nor Prior discloses the limitations presented in the new claims 3 and 4 (Page 5 Lines 13 and 16), see rejection above.

Conclusion

5. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

6. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Carlos Lugo whose telephone number is 703-305-9747. The examiner can normally be reached on 9-6pm EST.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Daniel P. Stodola can be reached on 703-308-2686. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 872-9306.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-306-5771.

Carlos Lugo
AU 3676

June 14, 2004.

John B. Walsh
Primary Ex.
AU 3676